

Del. 1 déjà vu: Northbound lanes to open

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ODESSA — The state Department of Transportation today will open the 11-mile Del. 1 relief route around Odessa and Boyds Corner.

Sound familiar? Just call it a sequel. The state opened the southbound lanes three weeks ago — and, as was the case then, officials expect a bumpy transition and are urging motorists to find alternate routes through southern New Castle County.

"We anticipate on Monday there are going to be some pretty serious delays," said Michele Ackles, a DelDOT spokeswoman. "Anyone that is able to avoid the area by going northbound on [Del. 9] or [Del.] 896 is encouraged to do so."

Crews are scheduled to shift traffic onto the northbound lanes of the new limited-access highway by 9 a.m.

"This time, it's going to be a piece of cake," David Duke, the department's resident engineer for the project.

Today's work is part of a complicated process to open the \$98.7 million segment of highway, which promises to unclog U.S. 13, especially on summer weekends. Highway crews opened the southbound lanes of the toll road Oct. 18 after an all-morning, carefully choreographed routine of last-minute work.

They have been working since to prepare the northbound lanes for

debut today.

Workers have to pave the tie-in between the northbound lanes of U.S. 13 and Del. 1 just below Odessa. To do this, there will be lane restrictions that could cause problems for rush-hour traffic, Duke said.

Work is scheduled to begin at 7 a.m. and could last through 5 p.m. Duke said this round of work should be easier than that done Oct. 18 because there isn't as much to be done.

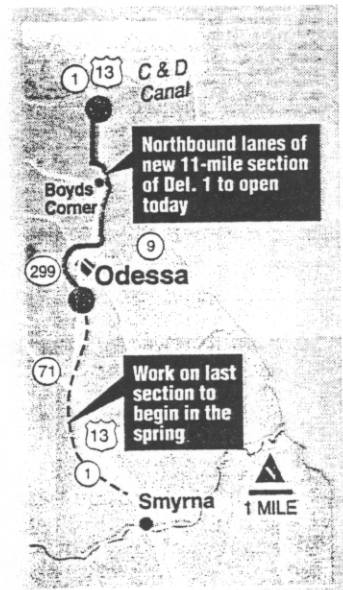
Today's opening means motorists will be able to take free rides on the toll highway in both directions — at least for another week.

The \$1 toll for cars at the Biddles Corner plaza will go into effect Nov. 17. Tolls can't be collected until work is finished on two ramps at the base of the new Chesapeake & Delaware Canal bridge.

Those ramps linking Del. 1 and U.S. 13 will allow traffic using the old highway to cross the canal for free.

This section of Del. 1 is the latest phase of the process of building a limited-access toll road stretching from near the canal south to Dover. The Dover-Smyrna bypass was completed in 1993.

Work on the final section of highway, from Odessa to Smyrna, is expected to begin in the spring and be completed by 2003.



Source: DelDOT

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